

# ARTNEWS

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## MARK GROTJAHN AT ANTON KERN

BY *Anne Doran* POSTED 10/30/15

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Mark Grotjahn is best known for his virtuosic paintings. But more recently, he's also been showing painted bronze sculptures whose originals are cardboard boxes that he has carved into crude faces, sometimes adding a long paper tube (or two) for a nose. The eleven works here, less volumetric and more exuberantly painted than in the past, split the difference between two and three dimensions.

While Grotjahn's paintings owe much to early modernist abstraction, the vibrant surfaces of these mostly finger-painted pieces conjured such mid-20th-century painters as Philip Guston and Joan Mitchell. At the same time, their masklike features evoked African tribal art as filtered through Picasso and Max Ernst.

The resulting pieces, set in conversational groupings, were electrifying, notably *Untitled (Race Track Scribble, Jackson Mask M41.d)*,

2015, a silvery work whose eyes, nose, and mouth are connected with a wandering line of white; *Untitled (The Skies Remembered II, French Mask M31.e)*, 2014, a pink confection with off-kilter eyes and a gaping mouth that should be too pretty but isn't; and *Untitled (Crisscrossed and Lettered, Jackson Mask M41.c)*, 2015, which sets Grotjahn's name and the date of the work loose among ribbons of color. Grotjahn's foray into sculpture has paid off in these works of enormous vitality and offhand beauty.



Mark Grotjahn, *Untitled (Orange over Mountain Walk, Italian Mask M30.g)*, 2014, oil on bronze, 51¼" x 34" x 44".

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